



UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

**MUSIC PREFERENCES OF TEENAGE STUDENTS IN RELATION TO
LISTENER PSYCHOLOGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL INFLUENCES**

MIRANDA YEOH POH-KHOON

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By

MIRANDA YEOH POH-KHOON

**Thesis submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia,
in Fulfilment of the Requirement for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

November 2002



Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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Chairman: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Rahil Mahyuddin

Faculty: Educational Studies

A survey was carried out to investigate music preferences of 436 teenage students from the four pilot schools offering music education in the Klang valley. Respondents were selected by random cluster sampling. Twenty-four brief music excerpts, six each of ethnic-related Malaysian music, pop, rock and western art music were utilised. Besides studying the whole sample, music preferences of *KBSM* Music students ($n = 205$) were compared to those of non-music students ($n = 231$). *KBSM* Music students obtained higher preference means for most of the excerpts, especially instrumental ones as compared to the non-music students. Music students also had higher preference means for all the four genres under study.

Correlation analyses showed that three independent variables ('Familiarity', 'Influence of Mood', a psychological variable and 'Influence of Music Characteristics') with consistent moderate correlations with Music Preference and with preferences for all the genres for the whole sample and both subject option sub-samples. However, only the music sub-sample showed moderate correlations for the influence of other variables

(Family, Peers, Teachers, Artistes/ Composers, Media and Incidental Conditioning) on western art music preference. For non-music students only, the psychological variable 'Wellness of Mood' showed a low but significant correlation with Music Preference, and preferences for the commercial genres, pop and rock. Only for non-music students, the personality dimensions 'Neuroticism', and 'Extraversion' showed low but significant correlations preference for commercial music.

A regression analysis for the whole sample showed three important predictors: 'Familiarity', 'Influence of Mood', and 'Influence of Music Characteristics' explaining 29% of the variance in music preference while two marginal predictors ('Influence of Media', and 'Neuroticism') explaining another two percent. In view of the many variables influencing the psychological behaviour, music preference, it is a modest amount for five of them to explain 31 percent of variance. From the experience gained from the study and in the light of the findings, the researcher suggests methodological and theoretical implications, besides specific strategies in teaching approaches and the choice of learning materials for Music *KBSM*, with the aim of fulfilling all its five objectives.

Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk Ijazah Doktor Falsafah.

**PEMILIHAN MUZIK PELAJAR REMAJA DAN HUBUNGANNYA DENGAN
PSIKOLOGI PENDENGAR DAN PENGARUH SEKITAR**

Oleh

MIRANDA YEOH POH KHOON

November 2002

Pengerusi: Prof. Madya Dr. Rahil Mahyuddin

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Tinjauan dijalankan untuk mengkaji pemilihan muzik oleh 436 pelajar remaja yang dipilih dari empat buah sekolah rintis di Lembah Klang di mana pendidikan muzik diajar. Responden dipilih melalui persampelan cluster rawak. Dua puluh empat petikan muzik pendek, enam petikan untuk setiap satu jenis muzik: etnik Malaysia, pop, rock dan klasik Barat digunakan. Selain daripada mengkaji pemilihan muzik seluruh sampel, pemilihan muzik pelajar Muzik *KBSM* ($n = 205$) dibandingkan dengan pemilihan muzik pelajar tidak mengambil Muzik ($n = 231$). Pelajar Muzik *KBSM* mencatat skor pemilihan purata yang lebih tinggi untuk kebanyakan petikan, khususnya petikan instrumental. Pelajar Muzik *KBSM* juga mencatat skor pemilihan purata yang lebih tinggi untuk semua empat jenis muzik yang digunakan untuk kajian.

Analisis korelasi menunjukkan tiga pemboleh ubah ('Kebiasaan', 'Pengaruh Mood', suatu pemboleh ubah psikologi dan 'Pengaruh Ciri Muzik') yang sentiasa mempunyai korelasi sederhana dengan Pemilihan Muzik dan pemilihan setiap jenis muzik, untuk

seluruh sampel dan kedua-dua sub-sampel. Tetapi hanya pelajar muzik menunjukkan korelasi sederhana untuk pengaruh pemboleh ubah lain (Keluarga, Rakan, Guru, Artis/Penggubah, Media dan Kelaziman Insidental) ke atas pemilihan muzik Klasik Barat. Hanya golongan pelajar tidak mengambil muzik menunjukkan 'Kebaikan Mood' (suatu pemboleh ubah psikologi) mempunyai korelasi dengan Pemilihan Muzik dan pemilihan muzik komersial, pop dan rock, yang positif dan signifikan walau pun kecil. Golongan pelajar tidak mengambil muzik juga menunjukkan dimensi personaliti 'Neurotisma' dan 'Extraversion' mempunyai korelasi yang signifikan walau pun kecil ke atas pemilihan muzik komersial.

Analisis regresi untuk seluruh sampel menunjukkan tiga peramal penting: 'Kebiasaan', 'Pengaruh Mood', dan 'Pengaruh Ciri Muzik' yang menerangkan sebanyak 29% varian dalam pemilihan muzik, sementara dua lagi peramal tambahan: 'Pengaruh Media' dan 'Neurotisma' yang menerangkan 2% varian. Memandangkan terdapat banyak pemboleh ubah yang boleh mempengaruhi tingkahlaku psikologi seperti pemilihan muzik, jumlah varians sebanyak 31% oleh lima pemboleh ubah ini adalah memadai. Daripada pengalaman dan hasil kajian ini, penyelidik mencadangkan implikasi dari segi metodologi dan teori, serta strategi yang spesifik dalam pendekatan pengajaran dan pemilihan atau penyediaan bahan pembelajaran untuk Muzik *KBSM*, dengan tujuan mencapai kesemua lima objektif.

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I certify that an Examination Committee met on 18th November 2002 to conduct the final examination of Miranda Yeoh Poh-Khooon on her Doctor of Philosophy thesis entitled “

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the thesis is based on my original work except for quotations and citations which have been duly acknowledged. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted for any other degree at UPM or other institutions.



MIRANDA YEOH POH-KHOON

Date: 9 Jan 2003 .

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Malaysia is a multi-racial country of 23 million, with three main ethnic groups: Malays (47%), Chinese (25%) and Indians (7%). Besides these, there are indigenous people comprising mainly the *Orang Asli*, *Ibans* and *Kadazans*, and 'Others' or 'Non-Malaysian citizens', consisting of Arabs, Singhalese, Eurasians and Europeans (Malaysia, Department of Statistics, 2001). Five component cultures namely Malay, Chinese, Indian, Western and Indigenous, interact dynamically and inter-assimilate characteristics of each other to produce a shared national culture (Ang, 1998).

As music is an essential component of culture, this plural environment has a rich musical heritage. Various names have been used to describe the different categories of music in a particular society; these names include modern music, contemporary, folk, art, popular, syncretic, trans-national, and acculturated music. The method of categorisation and the names employed for the types of music depends largely on the historical, social, cultural, and political climate of a society or country (Matusky and Tan, 1997). A brief description of the history of Malaysia in the next few paragraphs will enable the reader to understand the reason for the method to classify the music as used in this thesis.

The course of Malaysian history has been charted by its strategic geographical position at a major crossroad for traders from the East and West. Communication, trade and development by way of the sea were responsible for the formation of this unique multi-ethnic country. Regular trade with India and China around the first century BC resulted in a strong Hindu-Buddhist influence of the Indian culture on the local language, social custom and literature. Similarly, Arab and Indian traders brought Islam, a religion that quickly penetrated the region and was already predominant by the 13th century. In the 1400s, Islam was already the official religion of the Malays and Malacca became a focal point for the spread of this religion along the trade routes (Berita Publishers, 2000).

The Portuguese invaded Malacca in 1511, but neither Portuguese nor Dutch (who captured Portuguese Malacca) power was extensive. It was the British who managed to exert greater influence especially in the 19th century. From their bases in the Straits Settlements comprising Penang (1786), Singapore (1819) and Malacca (1824), British influence spread to other states of the Malay Peninsula. Through various arrangements and treaties, the British gained direct supervision over a substantial number of states of the Peninsula. British colonisation was a significant historical event to shape the local culture and music of Malaysia. It had provided greater security for trade, paving the way for increased migration of Chinese and Indian labourers in the 19th and early 20th centuries into an attractive country that permitted unrestricted immigration until 1930 (Jessy and Khera, 1981).